

Testimony

on

House Bill 4136

From

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Madam Chairperson and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 4136.

In 1919, a group of WWI officers, non-commissioned officers, and a variety of other military members gathered first in Paris , France than in St. Louis, Mo and then in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At those 3 meetings the foundation of The American Legion was discussed and agreed upon. Our foundations are based on four pillars, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Children and Youth, National Security, and Americanism. Each pillar has their own programs and objectives for Posts to participate in and make the country and the organization better.

In our preamble to our constitution, that Legionnaires recite before every meeting; 2 lines that give support to this bill.

“To foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism”

and “To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation”

At the Minneapolis Convention in 1919, 2 of the original Americanism Commission objectives were

1. Spread throughout the people of the nation the information as to the real nature and principles of American Government and
2. Foster the teachings of Americanism in all schools.

The American Legion support Americanism through the programs we offer in Baseball, our Boys State Week program, Student trooper program, teaching flag etiquette in schools, supporting a flag in every classroom, our School Awards Program, and our veterans in the classroom program. The American Legion bleeds Duty, Honor, Courage.

In 1984 The American Legion through resolution No. 32, urged the US Department of Education “to consider developing a comprehensive outline of instruction covering the rights and responsibilities of loyal patriotic U.S. Citizens; and, be it further Resolved that this outline be made available to all state and local school systems for use in grades one through twelve; and, be it further Resolved that successful completion of a final comprehensive examination regarding citizenship responsibilities be recommended for graduation from high school.”

31 years later while people talk about teaching citizenship, Michigan has an opportunity to make it a part of the education process.

Each year since 1956 September 17th is put aside by Presidential proclamation to recognize Constitution Day and Citizens Day; “In remembrance of the signing of the Constitution and in recognition of the Americans who strive to uphold the duties and responsibilities of citizenship”.



For a week starting September 17th it is known as “Constitution Week” (established in 1956) the President encourages “Federal, State, and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, social, and educational organizations, to conduct ceremonies and programs that bring together community members to reflect on the importance of active citizenship, recognize the enduring strength of our Constitution, and reaffirm our commitment to the rights and obligations of citizenship in this great Nation.”

And with House Bill 4136 Michigan has an opportunity to ensure Michigan students learn the importance of US citizenship.

Active citizenship is important to the U.S. Congress, the U.S. President, and The American Legion Department of Michigan, we ask for the committees support in passing this legislation to show the State of Michigan is ready to do something about citizenship.

Thank you again for the opportunity and I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.